



Fondation  
Rideau Hall  
Foundation



# Application Guide

## Getting Started

Welcome to the application guide for Ingenious+ Spark powered by RHF and DMZ! This guide is designed to help you understand the application process clearly, outlining what is expected in your submission. It serves as a vital tool to ensure your application is complete, competitive, and accurately reflects your innovation's vision and potential.

## Important Dates

- Applications Open: February 2, 2026
- Applications Close: February 16, 2026, at 11:59pm EST
- Top Finalists Notified: Early March 2026
- Pitch Competition: March 31 and April 1, 2026

## Eligibility Criteria

1. Startup type: A tech startup dedicated to solving a compelling problem using innovative technology.
2. Stage: A functional minimum viable product (MVP).
3. Evidence of traction, such as customer interviews, pilot/beta users, product users, monthly recurring revenue
4. Scalability: The potential to be a VC-backed startup.
5. Team: At least one dedicated founder.

## Application Process

### 1. Online Application

- Fill out the online form, providing concise yet comprehensive information about your innovation. Ensure that all the relevant details about your innovation are clearly articulated.

### 2. Pitch Deck Submission

- **Creating Your Pitch Deck:** Design a pitch deck that is both informative and visually appealing.
  - **Essential Elements:** Include critical aspects of your business such as Problem and Solution, Market Analysis, Product/Service Overview, Business Model,



Team, Financial Projections, Growth Strategy, Current Traction, Funding Needs, etc.

- **Content Tips:** Ensure that your pitch deck is not overcrowded with information. Use clear, concise language and visuals to communicate your message effectively. Highlight your innovation's unique value proposition and how it addresses a gap or need in the market.

#### Please remember:

- **Eligibility:**

- Innovation includes a technology component (e.g. technology enabled or driven)
- May apply with an innovation other than the one for which they received an Ingenious+ Award
- Pitch winners will be required to incorporate to receive investment. While incorporation is not necessary prior to the pitch, it must be completed before the investment can be disbursed.

- **Selection Criteria:**

Companies participating will be evaluated based on the following areas, with each aspect contributing 20% of the overall assessment:

- **Product Stage:** Assessing the current development phase of your product/service, focusing on its readiness and refinement.
- **Pathway to Scalability:** Evaluating your strategy for growth and scalability, including plans for market expansion and adapting to increasing demand.
- **Founder-Market Fit:** Analyzing the alignment between the founders' expertise, experience, and the market they are targeting. This includes how well the team understands and can navigate the market landscape.
- **Market Opportunity:** Examining the potential size, demand, and dynamics of the market you're entering and how your product fits into this context.
- **Technological Innovation:** Gauging the degree of innovation in your technology, including its uniqueness, potential for disruption, and technical sophistication.

#### FAQs for Pitch and Pitch Deck

- **What should an effective pitch include?**

- Tell a succinct story outlining your business plan, focusing on the problem, solution, and unique value proposition.
- An effective model to help you organize your thoughts is by utilizing a [lean canvas](#).

- **How can I ensure my pitch deck stands out?**

- Use clear, compelling storytelling, back up your points with data, and keep the design clean and professional.

- **What are common pitfalls to avoid in a pitch deck?**

- Avoid overcrowding slides with information, using too much technical jargon, or vague financial projections.

- **How detailed should my financials be in the pitch deck?**

- For a 3-minute pitch, not a whole lot! Aim to provide clear, well-researched financial projections but keep them concise. Focus on key metrics like revenue, costs, and break-even analysis.
- **Can I get feedback on my pitch if I am not selected?**
  - Yes, we offer feedback to applicants upon request, to help you refine your pitch for future opportunities.
- **How can I show the scalability of my business on the pitch?**
  - Discuss your long-term vision, potential markets, and how you plan to grow and scale.
- **What should I focus on if my innovation is still in the early stages?**
  - Focus on the potential impact, your vision, and any initial traction or market validation you've achieved.

### Tips for Pitch and Pitch Deck

- **Pitch Deck Guidance:**
  - **Compelling Storytelling:** Craft a narrative that takes the viewer on a journey, explaining why your innovation matters.
  - **Data and Visuals:** Support your story with relevant data. Use high-quality visuals to enhance understanding and retention.
  - **Clarity Over Jargon:** Use simple, clear language. Avoid industry-specific jargon that might confuse or alienate your audience.
- **Pitch Tips:**
  - **Engage Immediately:** Begin with a captivating hook to immediately grab attention.
  - **Problem & Solution:** Clearly articulate the problem you're addressing and your innovative solution.
  - **Authenticity:** Be genuine and let your passion for what you're building shine through.

### Awards:

#### Top Finalists:

- Pitch your venture at DMZ, a world-leading tech incubator headquartered in Toronto, this spring. Compete live in front of an audience of industry leaders, investors and entrepreneurs on March 31–April 1, 2026 for an investment of up to \$100,000 through DMZ Ventures to grow your business.
- Pitch Advisory Sessions: The top 10 finalists will receive an online pitching workshop to refine their pitch and tell a better narrative on their business.